

What have you been setting your mind on and to what degree has that brought you life and peace, or worry, anxiety, and death?

3. Resurrection

11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

- Romans 8:11 NLT

For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

- 1 Corinthians 15:53 NLT

While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life.

- 2 Corinthians 5:4 NLT

Jesus' mortal body was raised to life. The tomb was empty. But he was made alive in a new, immortal body. Rom 8:11 says we have the same Spirit living in us and although our bodies will perish, we will also be resurrected. How does this influence your views or fear of death?

WRAP-UP

In Romans 8, Paul brings into stark contrast the difference between the flesh and the spirit. Not the physical flesh of our bodies, but the sinful nature we inherited through Adam. Paul is taking us on a journey that parallels the Exodus story, which the Jews in his audience would certainly have related to. Our sinful nature held us captive just as the Jews were captive in idolatrous Egypt, but Jesus freed us from being slaves to sin just like Moses led God's people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land where God would dwell with man in the Temple. And now God's Spirit dwells in His people (a new temple), filled with the Holy Spirit and we've been made alive by Christ. By the power of the Spirit living in us we are no longer slaves to sin and death but are alive and invited to live as the renewed-humans God created us to be.

MEMORY VERSE

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. - Romans 8:5 NLT

Challenge- When you find your thoughts wandering back to things of the flesh this week, be prepared to refocus with a verse or worship song that will center your thoughts on the Spirit.

Flesh and the Spirit

Romans 8 - Week 3

INTRODUCTION

This week as we continue our study of Romans 8, we will learn about our struggle and victory over Sin. Paul explains the conflict we find between the spirit and the flesh (our sinful nature). It is the battle between life and death. God's supremacy over sin and death was evidenced by Jesus' resurrection. And when His Spirit dwells in us, we have the power to win our battle with the sinful nature and live a life pleasing to God. When we do, we can catch a glimpse of the future God promises where all creation is renewed and recreated in the way God intended it, and we will live a resurrected life.

Ice Breaker

Do you have a favorite story or movie that depicts a life and death struggle? What is it?

Key Passage

5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. 7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. 8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. 9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) 10 And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. - Romans 8:5-11 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Flesh versus Spirit

When Paul refers to the flesh (Gr. sarx), he isn't talking about the physical body, he is referring to the sinful nature we inherited through Adam. It is the corruptible, decaying part of the world into which we were born. Sarx is the same word used in Galatians 5:19.

19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. - Galatians 5:19-21 NLT

6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. 7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. 8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. - Romans 8:6-8 NLT

As you read the results of following your sinful nature above, you will find some sins we recognize as seriously wrong; "big sins". But are there sins on this list that you tend to sweep aside as "small transgressions"? How do we justify overlooking these "little sins"? What does this passage indicate as the same consequence for sexual immorality and division (e.g. the dissention arising from a diversity of opinions)? How does Roman 8:7 explain the reason that allowing our sinful nature to control us leads to death?

When we see the word spirit, it comes from the Greek word pneuma which can be translated as the 3rd person of the trinity (Holy Spirit) or breath or wind or life. Consider the relationship amongst these various meanings. By His breath, God spoke all things into existence, He breathed into Adam and gave him life (Gen 2:7) At Pentecost, when the Spirit filled the disciples, they heard a mighty rushing wind (Acts 2:2).

If we want to understand the relationship between the sinful nature (flesh) and the spirit, we can read Galatians 5:17.

The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. - Galatians 5:17 NLT

I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. - Romans 7:15 NLT

As we read Gal 5:17, we find two sides to the battle we are in. It echoes Paul's lament in Romans 7:15. The power to overcome the evil that the sinful nature incites us to do, does not come from our own willpower, strength of character or good intentions. What power can overcome the sinful nature and how do we gain access to that power?

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

Based on 2 Cor 5:17, what happens to our identity when we accept Jesus as our Savior?

2. What We Behold, We Become

5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. - Romans 8:5-6 NLT

Christian living doesn't just happen. It takes what we call a mental effort, a concentrated exercise of the mind to focus on God's way of being human. But when the spirit is at work in us, we please God.

Under what circumstances do you find you are most susceptible to fall into sinful thought patterns; Is it being around certain people, going to certain places, when you are upset, angry or disappointed? What can you do to bring your thoughts back to control of the Spirit?

The work of the Spirit is shaping our lives through conviction, confession and repentance. The Spirit aligns our thoughts and our actions in a way that pleases God and results in abundant life. But when your mindset is in the flesh, it is hostile to God and leads to death. We are in a battle to remove our mind from the decaying world around us and surrender our thoughts to Jesus Christ who offers us life and peace instead of sin and death.